THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD

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EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD IS NEVER HEARD

Kenneth Goldsmith one day made the comment, 'no matter how many times you say something, there'll be someone who's hearing it for the first time.' This is clever and catchy in a way that sounds true. But actually, we see the opposite everyday: no matter how many times you say something, nobody will ever hear.

Even if you were to repeatedly say the most important thing in the world, nobody would ever hear. Whatever you say, no matter how many times you say it, nobody ever hears.

That this saying which goes unheard really could be the saying of the most important thing in the world makes no difference at all is, perhaps, amazing. Even the saying of these facts of perhaps amazingly overall structural neglect contains no capacity within itself to enforce memorization of the law just observed within the 'facts' themselves. This last statement of a doubled failure is itself no exception to the rule.

Which rule? The rule of unreading. But is unreading a rule? Isn't 'unreading' instead the last thing that can be gathered from granular instances of aberration into something like a steadfast law?

Simone Weil wanted to extend the theory of reading ('pure reading') to nothing less than everything, and the reason seems simple: because she saw the impossibility of reading and of not reading anything at all.

Is it relaxing, horrifying, liberating, magnifying, appeasing, or all of these things at the same time, to notice that even the most important and urgent things in the world cannot break the gloaming surface of reading, and that this surface is itself a function of automated oblivion?

Why even say then? Why say even the most important thing in the world? Which is to say, why *specify* that thing? Or again, if this most important thing will not be read even in a repeated arc of specifications, what as-suchness if any belongs to these specification effects? Isn't content-abstinence a given—or at the very least a background—and not a special achievement? Whatever we say or do, human reading is impossible.

PASSION AND DIFFERENCE

If there is an important cognition here that somehow 'remains', it is the following: *the mind cannot remain at rest in a mere repertorization of its own recurrent aberrations; it is bound to systematize its own negative self-insight into categories that have at least the appearance of passion, novelty, and difference.*

This is where omnilapse meets memorization and inscription, and where inscription meets ongoing hyper-numeric extinction. The temptation to think that *if only* we could rest a moment and remember what happens here every time we try to say and fail to do so, or to think that *if only* we could let go of the need to describe then the mind would remain fully at rest, is itself just what carries the same formalizable traits of relapse back into passion and difference.

We can only—if even this—be assured for a second that nothing but this more advanced cognition of 'failure' is capable of 'happening'. The mind, striving by all means to be at rest and let go, cognizes just this, and then forgets just this, precisely as it moves onwards into enthusiasms and projects in any case, regardless of what it may have lately noted and affirmed.

EXTINTION QUA EXTINCTION WILL NEVER BE READ

But in that case, what *is* the most important thing in the world, and what happens when it (the most important thing in the world) is said as a sort of after-effect of never being able to be read? Let us indulge a thought experiment for a moment and say that from the point of view of something called 'angelicism', extinction qua extinction is the most important thing in the world.

Why this choice of important thing? It is because the world needs to be a world to be a continuing world in the first place such that without this world, we are no longer here. But also—so the thought experiment goes—because if we attend to extinction qua extinction as an urgent and evolving poetico-scientific fact, we have a greater chance of being here for longer as a civilization, and the value of this duration—let's say a trillion or more generations than otherwise—is also potentially infinite.

Quantity here is pure quality, duration an infinite good, and total life as redoubt in knowledge of extinction a new axiom of the infinite. Eternal life is a rational achievement contingent on exposure to annihilation. That is perhaps what angelicism qua angelicism will have meant (failed to mean).

PRIMAL UNREADING

But if, as already noted, *even the allegedly most important of all most important things in the world namely extinction qua extinction can never be heard* (i.e knowledge of human extinction is impossible), is it still the most important thing in the world, which is also to say is it important as a thing to be said at all, and is the most important thing in the world instead the arbitrary rule of unreading and relapse into passion and difference that means we never listen to what most needs listening to for the world to be the world in what we call 'the first place'? Is unreading the most important thing in the world? Is the most important thing in the world that thing which prevents us from attending to the most important thing in the world so that the world may be just that, a continued world—continuance and lifetimes as such, total life?

Not quite, we can answer with a strained degree of confidence, precisely because unreading is itself subject to unreading even after the declaration of just that

importance of attending to extinction qua extinction as imperatively unreadable. No matter how many times you say extinction qua extinction cannot be read, nobody will ever hear. No matter how many times you declare the sense of extinction qua extinction as a Great Filter deal breaker is not being listened to, nobody will ever listen. No matter how many times you change the sense of extinction itself, and the whole of ontology with it, nobody will have read it, nobody will have been capable of caring. It's impossible that anything at all has ever taken place.

Does this 'nobody' include artificial thought and its (theoretically projected) permanent memory event horizons? Perhaps, since the tendency to forget as we read, and to unread as we read, is itself technically baked-in i.e. this deeply amnesiac tendency is integral in a machinelike way to the 'laws' of reading and unreading, whether human or otherwise.

In this sense, extinction qua extinction would not be a material fact that we strive to notice and formalize and move towards so as to escape, but instead threatens to be the rule of unreading as instant amnesia and autolapse into passion and its differences that always happens to whatever we try and fail to make happen and then auto-lapses into the same inevitable mistake (pain of itself). As soon as we read or unread, we obliterate what we have just seen or thought. Reading overprints, submerges, extincts. It is reading itself that extincts, and not extinction, we can almost say. Reading is extinction qua extinction.

CLOPEN READING

This series of forgettable observations also temporarily puts into perspective the question, 'so why bother to write'. If the relapse into passion and difference takes place indifferently, whether we write or read or not, then writing is not a matter of choice or subjective style. Writing and reading are not things that take place with us; rather, they take place without us.

Just this is the extent of Weil's enlargement of the sense of reading to pure reading. When she says that we must become towards and think as the whole universe and

nothing else, since only the entire universe is beautiful, she means that we must extend pure reading to the entire universe, to know that it passes through there, everywhere, like a boundless open secret—that there is no such thing as not knowing how to read or failing to unread.

The obligation she gives us in the name of pure reading, appearing contrary at first to all of the above, is to try not to read. Not reading is the real challenge for Weil simply because reading takes place at all times, so that this also means that unreading becomes equidistant with reading the universe at every point and this is called by her 'justice'. What Weil really wants is a unity of reading and unreading. A unity of necessarily blinded reading and necessarily open reading. That she explicitly calls 'justice' this impossible justice will have been something we forget to read.

To this totalized reading of total universal life called justice we might nonetheless give a new name for no reason: clopen reading. In the theory of topology, a clopen set in a topological space (a portmanteau of closed-open set) is a set which is both open and closed. The axis of justice in reading is this moment where a set is impossibly open and closed at the same time. 'Not to read', Weil writes, and then adds, 'possible only for a few moments.'

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Is not to read, as a form of non-extinction, a continuation of nobody ever hearing?

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